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RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNOSC/ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY COOPERATION IN EUROPE PRIORITY

RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 0353

RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY 0121

RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0271

RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0548

RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 0102

RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 0309

RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0578

RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY 0149

RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0183

RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 0609

RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0283

RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 0519

RUEHSQ/AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY 3283

RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0389

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 USNATO 000295

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2017

TAGS: [NATO PREL AF](#)

SUBJECT: NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL READOUT MAY 9, 2007

Classified By: DCM Richard G. Olson for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY:

Note: The NAC began with an exchange of views with Macedonian Minister of Foreign Affairs Milososki and Minister of Defense Elenovski on progress made in the context of the Membership Action Plan; reporting on this exchange to follow by septel. End Note.

-- Afghanistan: SYG de Hoop Scheffer pressed for better ISAF/OEF coordination on strategic communications, receiving strong support from Ambassador Nuland and other PermReps. Deputy Chairman of the Military Committee (D/CMC) detailed coalition operations and ISAF support in Shindand (RC-W) and stated that all actions were fully consistent with ISAF OPLAN. International Military Staff (IMS) informed the NAC that two explosively formed penetrator (EFP) weapons were found in Herat. SYG called for more donations to ISAF's Post-Operation Humanitarian Relief Fund; Ambassador Nuland backed his call.

-- Kosovo: SYG highlighted his conversation with UNSYG Special Representative Rucker who expressed appreciation for KFOR support during the recent UNSC visit and committed to maintain UN police levels until EU mission in place. PermReps to discuss Kosovo informally in SYG Coffee on May 110.

-- A-3: Council agreed to an abbreviated Membership Action Plan (MAP) cycle for the three aspirant countries to be completed by early February 2008.

-- Iraq: Turkey cautioned that the Iraqi Council of Representatives, hasty action on issues regarding status of Kirkuk could negatively affect regional stability.

-- Terrorism: SYG announced that the final certification and approval process is underway for a Ukrainian ship to participate in Operation Active Endeavor.

-- AOB) Qatar SOFA: SYG called the latest Qatari proposal

&disappointing.8 D/ASG Simmons will travel to Doha on May 10 for another round of talks. SYG considering a call to Qatari Crown Prince, but is not optimistic that a SOFA will be agreed before June 4 deadline.

END SUMMARY.

Afghanistan

12. (C) SYG de Hoop Scheffer said he intended to raise the issue of civilian casualties and better strategic communications coordination between ISAF and OEF with PermReps in an informal meeting soon. Citing widespread allegations and significant media reporting of civilian casualties resulting from a late-April engagement by Coalition Special Forces in Shindand in RC-West (over 140 opposing military forces (OMF) were killed during the operations), and additional May 9 reports of fighting in Sangin (RC-South), SYG noted that these incidents have exacerbated confusion in the press, with contradictory reporting in even mainstream outlets as to who does what, ISAF or OEF. He also worried that COMISAF McNeill's recent press briefings, during which he provided much information about OEF operations, may have contributed to European misunderstanding of operational responsibilities. The SYG recognized that, however unfortunate and unintended, there will be future civilian casualties during ISAF and OEF missions, and encouraged both operations to do better on joint strategic communications. He also urged nations to do more to alleviate the human suffering associated with civilian casualties, such as contributing to the ISAF Post-Operations Humanitarian Relief Fund or the Afghan

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Civilian Assistance program run by the International Organization for Migration.

13. (C) D/CMC LTG Karl Eikenberry briefed that the U.S.-led Coalition had coordinated actions in Shindand with the RC-West commander, and confirmed that ISAF had provided in extremis support. He stated ISAF actions were fully consistent with the OPLAN, and that an investigation was underway concerning civilian casualties. D/CMC also noted that the next Tripartite Commission meeting will be May 27 in Islamabad.

14. (C) IMS Assistant Director for Operations General Fenton told the NAC that two explosively formed penetrator (EFP) weapons had been found in Herat at the end of April, and it appeared as though another had recently been used in Kabul. Continued OMF use of these armor-piercing weapons will dramatically increase the IED threat to ISAF. He noted the three areas of greatest concern in RC-South are Garmser, the lower Sangin valley, and the Kajaki area, where indications are that sizeable enemy groups are gathering. He responded to press accounts alleging 21 civilian casualties in the Sangin area, noting that Coalition SOF and ANA were ambushed northeast of Sangin, and killed over 160 OMF with the aid of ISAF close air support. The engagement was coordinated with the RC-South command. Information on civilian casualties remained unclear, but 18 local nationals had been moved to ISAF medical facilities.

15. (C) Led by Ambassador Nuland, and echoed by the UK, Netherlands, and Spain, Allies supported the SYG's call for closer strategic communications between ISAF and OEF. Ambassador Nuland noted the need to also be aligned with Afghan government press operations, as well as for ISAF and OEF messages to resonate beyond Kabul, particularly in Europe. She asked for a NAC briefing from NATO PD officials on the current status of ISAF strategic communications, and also joined the SYG in urging Allies to contribute to the ISAF relief fund, noting U.S. national efforts to try to relieve effects of tragic civilian casualties. Noting that many NAC colleagues have had questions, the Ambassador asked NATO military authorities for more information on how ISAF

and OEF forces cooperate on a tactical level in theater. Citing the hundreds of sorties that U.S. Coalition aircraft have flown in support of ISAF, she noted U.S. appreciation for ISAF assistance to U.S. forces in Shindand.

¶16. (C) Responding to Ambassador Nuland's questions on ISAF/OEF coordination, General Fenton said that SACEUR told CHODs during their meeting earlier on May 9 that he was not sure that ISAF/OEF coordination was as good as it could be, and that he would raise this with CENTCOM Commander ADM Fallon in their upcoming meeting. D/CMC outlined the current ISAF/OEF coordination procedures at the RC level, noting the regional command is always aware of OEF operations in his AOR. However, the best planning cannot always predict what will happen since the enemy has a "vote" in how operations unfold. That is why continued ISAF/OEF coordination is essential. D/CMC urged that the Afghan government be included front and center in ISAF/OEF strategic communication efforts. He also urged commitment of trainers to develop Afghan security forces, noting that the Afghan people will give more leeway to their own forces with regard to civilian casualties, as opposed to foreign forces.

¶17. (C) In other interventions, the Spanish PermRep expressed concern at the recent bill passed by the Afghan Upper House of Parliament calling on international military operations to halt unless coordinated with the Afghan government. The Turkish PermRep gave a brief readout of the April 30 meeting in Ankara between Presidents Karzai and Musharraf, noting both had agreed that another meeting would be useful. Turkey intends to organize another meeting toward the end of 2007. The Turkish PermRep also informed the NAC that Turkey's

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donation of 24 155mm howitzers was handed over to the Afghan government in Kabul on May 9, and that Turkey would train 110 Afghan officers at its artillery school, beginning in June. He thanked the U.S. and CSTC-A for assistance in helping to make this happen.

Balkans: Kosovo

¶18. (C) The SYG noted that PermReps will informally discuss Kosovo at a coffee on May 10. He also shared with PermReps his recent conversation with Dr. Rucker, the UNSYG's Special Representative to Kosovo. Dr. Rucker expressed appreciation for KFOR's support during the recent visit of the UNSC, which he said had enabled non-European members of the Security Council to better understand the situation on the ground and the urgency of bringing the Kosovo status process to conclusion. Rucker also reaffirmed to the SYG that UNMIK would maintain police levels until the new ESDP mission is in place in Kosovo.

Balkans: Aspirants

¶19. (SBU) The SYG mentioned that one country (Greece) had broken silence on the SYG's proposal (SG(2007)0296) to schedule a shortened MAP cycle for the three aspirant nations (Albania, Croatia and Macedonia), but that the break concerned a "non-substantive" aspect of the proposal (i.e., that the abbreviated cycle should conclude by February 1, 2008, and not March 1, 2008). Thus, the SYG stated that it was agreed that NATO will schedule a shortened MAP cycle for the aspirant nations, which he said it will look to finish by early February 2008.

Iraq

¶10. (U) The SYG noted that the Spring Periodic Mission Review has been provisionally agreed by the NAC and is with Ukraine for its approval by May 10. D/CMC noted that SHAPE advice on gendarmerie training was under silence in the Military Committee.

¶11. (C) The Turkish PermRep expressed concern about an Iraqi

Council of Representatives, decision on implementation of Article 140 of the Constitution (which discusses the final status of Kirkuk and other disputed territories) that had been taken when Prime Minister Maliki was out of the country.

He reported that forms were being distributed to Arabs in the Kirkuk region urging them to leave in return for monetary compensation. He warned that rushing these issues or attempting to solve them through fait accompli would have negative repercussions on regional stability.

Terrorism

12. (SBU) The SYG announced that the certification and final approval process is underway for the Ukrainian ship, URS Tevnopil, to join NATO for an OAE mission from May 25 to July 13. Final NAC approval will need to occur after receipt of SACEUR's certification letter, scheduled to be sent to the Council before May 23.

AOB: Qatar SOFA

13. (U) The SYG reported that the revised proposal received from Qatar was disappointing and does not indicate flexibility on outstanding issues of jurisdiction and security guarantees. Deputy ASG Robert Simmons will travel again to Doha on May 12 for discussions with the Qataris. The SYG said that he may then call the Qatari Crown Prince to take stock of where we are, as the deadline for NATO's presence in Qatar is June 4. The SYG advised the NAC to consider the possibility that no agreement may be reached, and that NATO might need to look at alternatives to the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) in Qatar. Ambassador

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Nuland suggested that negotiations might be helped if the SYG were to call the Crown Prince prior to Simmons, visit.

NULAND